

A newsletter by, for & about
Canadian Gregors, their
heritage and their kin

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Maple Leaf MacGregors

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VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1

WINTER 2023-2024

From the Chair

Here we are once again putting up firewood and preparing for the winter months. 2023 is rapidly winding down and in Canada we are already experiencing shorter days and much colder nights. The march of the seasons. Some call it Fallter; an in-between season. This has always been a time of reflection for me.

Right now, I'm thinking about the Clan Gregor Gathering taking place in July 2024. It may seem like a long time away and yet, like the march of the seasons, it will be here soon. I'm proud to report that the Canadian Chapter will be represented with at least 18 members and possibly more on the wait list. While this group represents only 15% of our membership,

we will carry with us the support and goodwill of the entire Chapter. No doubt many members have a deep desire to connect with the country of their ancestral origin but are unable at this time. For both those attending, and those watching from afar, I offer these personal reflections and a sneak preview of what to expect based on the 2009 and 2018 Gatherings my wife and I attended. Elsewhere in this issue you will find testimonials from members who attended the 2018 Gathering and they speak for themselves.

First up, pack for 3 seasons as the weather can range from cold and damp all the way to hot and still; all in the same day. There's a sign in the airport that reads, "There's nothing wrong with our weather; only what you are wearing." Bring comfortable shoes as you will be on your feet a lot at times during the day. The same goes for comfortable and casual touring clothes.

If you can arrange it, flying into Glasgow or Edinburgh is a pleasant 7 hour direct overnight flight from Toronto, landing just as the sun comes up. The coaches will pick you up (be sure to arrange this in advance with Ross) and take you directly to the Loch Awe hotel, your home for the next week. This is

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Greetings from the Chair

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a classic Victorian era stone edifice, located within 100 meters of the remote shoreline of the loch and is reminiscent of the formality, old money and the simpler pleasure of times long past. In many respects it is the ideal place for us to gather, right in the heart of the three glens that make up our traditional homeland. The rooms are small but comfortable. You will receive an information package from the Society when you check in. There will likely be a welcome and orientation session on that first night after dinner. This is truly a fun time as you will meet Gregors from all over the world. There is a party atmosphere that's really hard to describe. Tough as it may be, try to get to bed at a good hour as you will likely be feeling the effects of a long travel day the following morning!

All breakfasts and evening meals are in the formal dining room and can be selected at your table from a couple of menu choices. We ate well in 2018 and by the end of the week you will be good friends with your table mates. Each day after breakfast, you will load up in the preassigned coaches that take us through the week's activities. Members of Council knowledgeable in our history will act as tour guides as we visit various sites of interest in the Gregor homelands and other local highlights. As with meals, these are the folks you will be spending lots of time with throughout the week so make the most of it by changing seats and conversations often! These can be long days so after cleanup, the evening meal and camaraderie are most welcome.

There may be some prearranged evening activity in the hotel but one thing is certain; the onsite pub is open every evening! Sometimes the best connections are found in the small groups that gather to share family backgrounds and stories. I'll go a step farther and say that all week long it's these conversations and random exchanges, occurring in the quiet moments when exploring a common history and heritage, that you will take home with you as happy memories of a most special time.

One evening we will gather for our banquet. This is a formal dinner and I encourage you to pack your finest kit as it is indeed a gala event. Kilts are most welcome, both ladies and men, but not required. If possible, you might want to bring at least a swatch of Gregor tartan or your Clan badge. This will be your chance to introduce yourself to our Chief, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor and his charming wife, Fiona, Lady MacGregor, as well as the other Members of Council responsible for so much of what we have and do as a Society. This is a night to be remembered!

One of the highlights of the week will be our visit to the Dalmally Kirk and the newly renovated and displayed burial carvings of our ancient Chiefs. Without castle or title, this is the closest our landless Clan has to a permanent historical placemark; the only tangible record of our occupancy of Glen Orchy, Glen Lochay and Glen Strae. The Kirk is charming, but the last two times I have visited, our Chiefs were outside in the graveyard after being removed from inside the church where they were buried. I'm very much looking forward to seeing these restored and prominently displayed near the altar where they were put to rest. This will be a highlight for many I suspect.

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Greetings from the Chair

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You will find that the week flies by all too quickly. Soon you will be saying goodbye to distant family; Clan that you share something special with and hope to see again. The coaches load up and you will be back on your way to Edinburgh or Glasgow. You will be full of rich memories and energized by this experience.

On a personal note, I can tell you that attending a Gathering forever put Clan Gregor and the Society on the map for me. It's hard to explain, but seeing, feeling and experiencing so many places and events I had heard or read about was most powerful. It helped me immeasurably to identify with my ancestral past. Scotland, and in particular the Highlands, is at the same time strikingly beautiful, moody, tragic and inspiring. It's hard to describe, but you will feel a deep sense of connection. You will feel at home.

So, I leave you with this thought. Whether we meet at the Gathering in 2024, a Highland Games, Burns Dinner or other Scottish event, or simply stay in touch in the year ahead through newsletters, emails, texts or calls, we are all Clan Gregor and we share a powerful and potent connection. Thank you for being a member of our Society, for your support and for your interest. This is truly what keeps us together: MacGregor despite them!

The very best of the Season to each of you. Merry Christmas and Happy Hogmanay.

Wayne MacGregor Parker

Loch Awe Hotel - Lochawe Village , Dalmally, Argyll



Canada Chapter Year in Review

Canada Chapter Year in Review

2023 was another successful year for the Clan Gregor Society Canada Chapter. In addition to adding 24 new members, we experienced a number of firsts. Our chapter is growing and expanding its influence and resources.

First, Councillors Bill Petrie and Sylvie Theriault significantly increased our exposure by attending a number of Highland Games while travelling across Canada as part of CASSOC's (Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada) efforts to increase awareness throughout Canada. This was an enormous undertaking and we are grateful for their efforts on our behalf. Please see our Highland Games Report elsewhere on page 19.

Second, we successfully launched our own online gift shop and began selling Gregor items of interest. Please go to www.mapleleafmacgregor.ca to see what we have to offer. These would make great Christmas gifts for family who are Gregors but not yet members. Be sure to shop at the company store! Many thanks to Alex Petrie for setting this up.

Third, we co-sponsored the Great Canadian Kilt Skate in February in Brampton, Ontario. This uniquely Canadian event has grown in popularity and seemed like a promising, true north family event to have our name associated with. We'll see where this goes next year.

Fourth, over 15% of our membership signed up to attend the 2024 Gathering, making sure that Canada's place as the newest Chapter is well represented and that our voice will be heard.

Lastly, our Chapter bank account briefly went over \$4000.00 for the first time. This may seem like a small thing, but considering that our Chapter is only 10 years old, it is a milestone of sorts when we think back to 2012 when five members signed up to form the Canada Chapter. That balance was short lived as we transferred over \$3000 of your subscription payments to Scotland to cover membership dues collected in 2023. It is important to note that we don't usually have much of a balance as we are not interested in growing a bank account. The monies collected primarily pay for membership dues and what is left over is used to cover Games fees, equipping our tent, materials purchased and our Scholarship award. Still, it feels like we are coming of age thanks to all of you.

No account of the year would be complete without special mention of the many efforts of Bill and Sylvie. Thank you both for all that you do for us. In addition to serving on Chapter Council, they serve as co-editors of the Maple Leaf MacGregor and are always cheerful and eager to as-

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sist. We are a volunteer organization and are always on the lookout for members willing to help with a variety of tasks, including the really fun stuff like manning our tent at Highland Games. If interested, do contact us and let's talk volunteer opportunities!

In closing we want to welcome our new members in 2023. Also listed are those joined in 2022 as this was not published last year. Welcome and thanks to each of you for joining the Clan Gregor Society.

New Members in 2022

Lorne and Trudy Grigg – Tappan BC

Sean Murvin Grigg – Kamloops BC

Adrienne (Grigg) Streibel – Airdrie AB

Marie Lynn Grigg – Calgary AB

Linda (Lecko) Leckie – Huntsville ON

Marcus Millett – Edmonton AB

Suzanne Macpherson – Burlington ON

Jeannie MacGregor – Waterloo ON

Brenda Zundel – West Kelowna BC

Margaret Wynne Stevenson – Kingston ON

Stephanie Lambrinakos-Raymond – Candiac QC

Andrew Roy – Orlean ON

Marion Fletcher – Corbiel ON

Pat McWilliams – Kemptville ON

Ed Gregory – Ottawa ON

Douglas A. Knight – Brockville ON

Diane Castonguay – Rosemere QC

Dale Rosas – Niagara Falls ON

Erica Petrie – Toronto ON

Scott McGregor – Victoria BC

Jenn Trommelen-Jones – Elmira ON

Lannie J Walker – Ayton ON

Robert and Heather Butts – Mt. Brydges ON

Harvey Bates – Innisfil ON

Sandy Henderson - St. Catherines ON

Ellen Beal – Bobcaygeon ON

Andrew Duke – East York ON

Neil and Cheryl Diamond – Dorchester ON

Ron Gregory – Etobicoke ON

Shawn Ruby – Stratford ON

Alexandria (Sandi) McGregor – Cambridge ON

Rebecca (Becky) Pagulayan – Abbotsford BC

Rebecca McGregor-Patterson – Tara ON

Alix MacGregor Williams- North Gower ON

Don Gair and Loretta Kucic – Carleton Place ON

Laura Ann Cluney – Calgary AB

Sue Andrews – Petawawa ON

Andrea Kirsten Tate – Coal Harbor BC

Jason MacGregor - Annandale PEI

Carolynn Trommelen and Allen Jones – Elora ON

Brian and Mae Petrie – Keswick ON

Sian MacGregor Williams – North Gower ON

New Members in 2023

Rushikesh Vilas Jagtap - Toronto ON
Richard Joseph Louis Lacasse - Calgary AB
Brendan Boyd and Mary Clarke-Boyd - Scarborough ON
Murray Rob Roy McGregor - Ottawa ON
Marilyn and Norman Harko - Kenabek ON
Katherine (Katie) Agnes Petrie - Casselman ON
Rene Stephen Saumure - Bourget ON
Sarah-Jane Gauthier - Wendover ON
David Andrew Fletcher - Ottawa ON
Delbert Caird - Verona ON
George Mervyn MacGregor - Ottawa, ON
Noah Tolhurst - Howick QC

Ashley Anne Spurrell - Barrie, ON
Beck Manz (Rebecca) - Goderich ON
Ian MacGregor Jackson - Scarborough ON
Heather May MacGregor - Innisfil ON
Matthew Bruce MacGregor - Paris ON
Jema MacGregor - Toronto ON
Jessica Black - Waterdown ON
Kathryn Elizabeth Skinner - Milton ON
Cole Matthew MacGregor - Haley Station ON
Richard Allan and Dolores Birnie - Coldstream BC
Larry Kenneth McGregor - North Saanich BC
Mya Rae Lyse - Calgary AB
Christopher Robert James Catley - Owen Sound ON



Consider the gift
of membership
for Christmas

For more about membership go to www.mapleleafmacgregor.ca/belong

Important Reminder

Membership renewals for 2024 are soon due in January for those whose memberships expire in 2023 and I would appreciate your prompt payment. Your membership number is shown along with the expiration date of your membership (eg mine is 3221/27) on the mailing label of the Newsletters you receive from Scotland. If in doubt call or email me and I'll be happy to assist.

Please send your \$45.00 Single or \$60.00 Family by e-transfer to treasurer@mapleleafmacgregor.ca or by cheque to CGSCC, PO Box 232, Dorset, ON P0A 1E0. Remember your best deal is to renew for five years for the price of four (\$180.00 Single/ \$240.00 Family). Your prompt attention to this will be much appreciated.

Do keep in mind that the Society is considering a reduced fee for those who wish to receive a digital copy of the Newsletter instead of a hard copy. Should Scotland go ahead with this, and you choose to go digital, your membership will be extended by whatever savings you are due.

If I don't receive your subscription by the end of May, I will send you an email reminder. Please consider that I'm a volunteer and it's always nice to receive prompt renewals without having to make repeated appeals! Many thanks.

Wayne MacGregor Parker

General Inquiries

A reminder that should you need to update your contact information, seek specific information or just have a general question regarding your membership or anything related to Gregors, please contact me directly at macgregor@telizon.ca or 705 766 1810.

We are a Chapter of the parent Society in Scotland and as such all inquiries and issues are to be channeled through the Chapter unless specifically directed in cases such as sending deposits for the Gathering etc. Your attention to this will be much appreciated.

What's in a Name? Contest

What's In a Name?

We started this contest last year and perhaps many missed it so we're running it again. **The Prize is a free five-year membership subscription.** Photos submitted can be seen anytime using the upload page at www.mapleleafmacgregor.ca/mediafileupload.

As we close out 2023 let's have some fun. With this in mind we're launching a contest for all members of the Canadian Chapter.

It's really very simple. Find, photograph and send a picture of any version of Gregor, MacGregor, McGregor, Mcgregor or any variation of the name of our Clan that you can find on a sign, marker, map location, business or building here in Canada. You can send your pictures as often as you like. Multiple entries are very welcome and encouraged.

All entries should be sent to editors@mapleleafmacgregor.ca and will be published in a future issue of the Maple Leaf MacGregor.

The contest is open until November 2024. The winner will be determined by our editors Sylvie Theriault and William Petrie. They assure me they can't be bought or influenced!

Be creative and let's see how many places we can find in Canada where our name is used and publicly presented. The following are examples that we've found so far.

Wayne MacGregor Parker



What's in a Name? Contest



Music of the MacGregors - Part I

Music of the MacGregors - Part I

Gregors have a long association with music. We are often associated with the early rise of the art of piping and in particular piobaireachd. Every year at the Balquhidder, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Highland Games master pipers compete for the Druim a' Charraigh Quaich presented by the Clan Gregor Society to the day's winner of the Piobaireachd competition. The Society sponsors this to commemorate the MacGregor Piping School which flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries near the mouth of Glen Lyon. Among the Clan's many eminent pipers was John MacGregor of Fortingall who, on joining Prince Charlie at Glen Finnan in 1745, became his piper and personal attendant. Although wounded at Culloden, John survived and at age



Sir Malcolm MacGregor presenting Dr Peter McCalister with the Druim a'Charraich Quaich in 2018

73 in 1781, won third prize at the Falkirk Tryst, widely held to be the forerunner of the modern piping competitions now held in Scotland and throughout the world wherever there are Highland Games. Be sure to go to the CGS website xxx for more on John and a long list of distinguished Gregor pipers right up to the present.

In addition, a number of songs and ballads have been written and handed down through the years commemorating individual Gregors and key events in our history. These are interesting sources of information and even pride for and about our Clan. The details of the traditional tunes may be obtained from collections of Scottish songs, or specific searches in Scottish music libraries, or by mail from the National Library of Scotland, Music Room, King George Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW. Three of these are featured in this article and others will be shared later in parts two and three.

MacGregors Gathering

This was written by Sir Walter Scott and adapted to a traditional tune. In 1817 Sir Walter pub-

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lished his book, Rob Roy, and it was destined to become an enormous success. Today it is widely credited with launching the historical novel genre in literature. In addition, unintended consequences included influencing King George II's arranging Rob's pardon after reading his story. As a result of the awareness of our story, the fortunes of Clan Gregor improved to the point where we were entrusted with conveying the Honors of Scotland in the procession from Holyrood Palace to Edinburgh Castle in King George II's royal march of 1822.

MacGregors' Gathering

*The moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day;
Our signal for fight, which from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful halloo.
Then halloo, hallo, halloo, Gregalach!
If they rob us of name and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame and their flesh to the eagles!
Then gather, gather, gather,
Gather, gather, gather;
While there's leaves in the forest
And foam on the river, MacGregor, despite them,
Shall flourish for ever.
Glenorchy's proud mountains, Kilchurn and her towers,
Glen Strae and Glen Lyon no longer are ours;
We're landless, landless, landless, Gregalach,
Landless, Landless, landless.
Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt.
Then halloo, halloo, halloo, Gregalach!*

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Music of the MacGregors - Part I

(Continued from page 11)

*If they rob us of name and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame and their flesh to the eagles!
Then gather, gather, gather,
Gather, gather, gather;
While there's leaves in the forest
And foam on the river,
MacGregor, despite them,
Shall flourish for ever.*



Reginald De Koven in 1904

Rob Roy MacGregor

This chorus is from Rob Roy, an 1894 operetta by composer Reginald De Koven and lyricist Harry B. Smith, frequent collaborators, and was loosely based upon the life of Rob as a Scottish folk hero. It is written to the tune "Duncan Gray".

Designated "A Romantic-Comic Opera in 3 Acts", it opens with a formal overture. The operetta is a good example of how popular stories conflate and distort history in the name of entertainment. Not to let the facts get in the way, the plot covers the adventures of Rob Roy, a highland chieftain secretly married to the daughter of the mayor of Perth, and Bonnie Prince Charlie, the young pretender to the

throne of Scotland, who in reality didn't set foot in Scotland until 11 years after the MacGregor's death. The performance included several songs in imitation of Scottish folk tunes, including this one to Rob.



Harry B. Smith.

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Rob Roy MacGregor

*Pardon now the bold outlaw,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Grant him mercy, gentles a',
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Let your hands and hearts agree,
Set the highland laddie free,
Let us sing wi muckle glee
Rog Roy MacGregor, O!*

*Long the state has doomed his fa',
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Still he spurned the hatefu' law,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Scots can for their country dee;
Ne'er frae Britains's foes they flee,
A' that's past forget – forgie,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!*

*Scotland's fear and Scotland's pride,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Your award must now abide,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!
Lang your favours hae been mine,
Favours I will ne'er resign
Welcome then for auld lang syne,
Rob Roy MacGregor, O!*

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Music of the MacGregors - Part I

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MacGregors' Coronach

This is truly a sad, melancholic tune. It is a general lament, written in 1850, about the clearance of the landless Clan Gregor from its territories around Loch Katrine, Glen Gyle and Loch Awe. It was written by David MacBeth Moir, a surgeon with romantic interests using the pen name Delta. It is uncertain why he chose to write about the plight of the MacGregor Clan, but we're glad he did as it is a noble testament to our truly tragic history.



*On grey Ben Ledi stern
The purple heath-flowers grow
And spreads the lady fern
Through many a glen below;
Still soars the eagle as he screams
Above Loch Katrin's tide,
But ah! beside his Father's streams
MacGregor's name hath died!*

*That name was one of power,
It drew the clansman's sword,
And in the fight's red hour
He owned no other lord;
The Pinetree on his flag displayed
The Saxon rose defied,
But now from out Balquihidder's shade
MacGregor's name hath died!*

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Music of the MacGregors - Part I

(Continued from page 14)

*No more the slogan rings
Its gathering notes afar,
No more the fire cross brings
The scattered clan to war;
The timid Roe-buck makes his lair
On Ben-ean's rocky side,
And whirrs the lonely heath-cock where
MacGregor's name hath died!*

*The spider weaves it pall
The bat broods o'er its young
Within the mouldering hall
Whose roofs with laughter rung!
No more the horse and hound for chase
At dawn bound forth in pride,
Even in the Chieftain's dwelling-place
MacGregor's name hath died!*

*No more the bannered Pine
Beside Loch Earn is met:
Of Alpine's royal line
The martial star hath set;
Mourn Ben Venue, Ben Ledi mourn!
Though Saxon sneers deride,
The heart from out your hills is torn
MacGregor's name hath died!*

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Music of the MacGregors - Part I

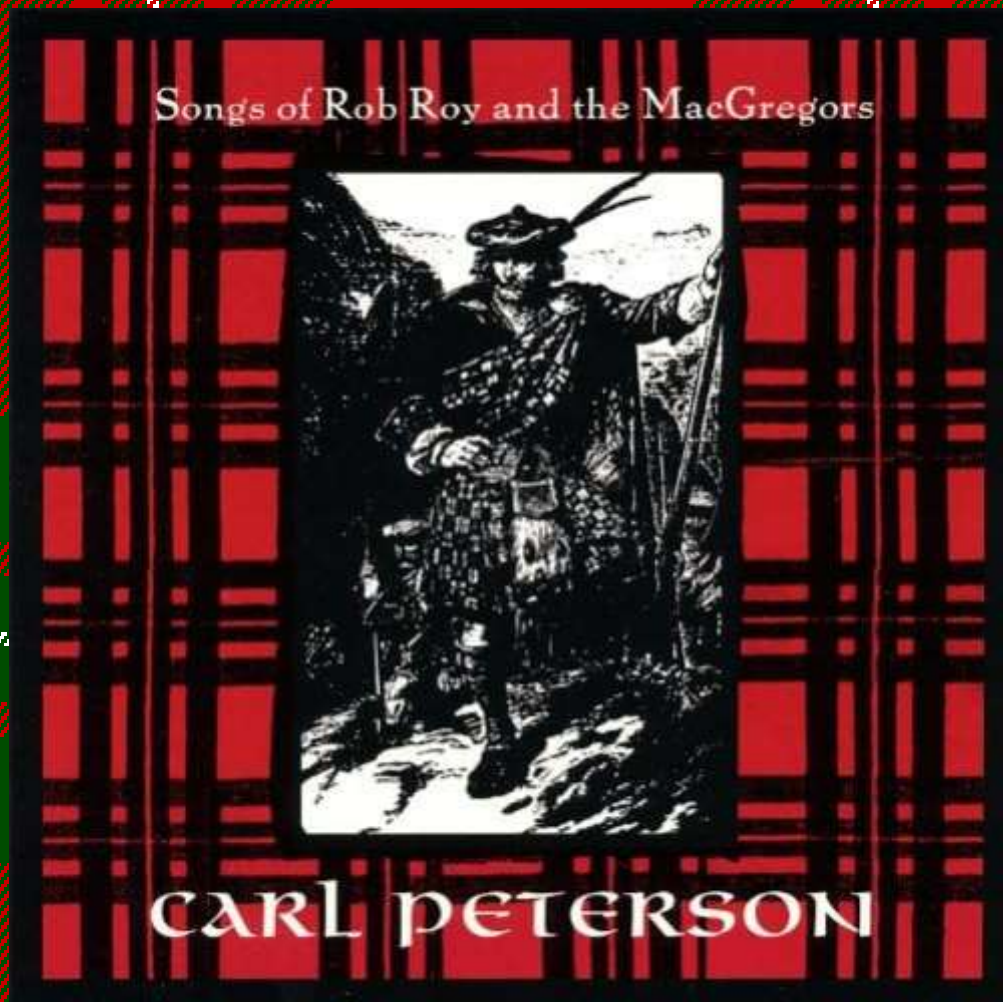
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In addition to entertainment, songs have long been a part of preserving generational histories by the passing down of stories and events through oral traditions. We can enjoy these and gain insights through the medium of music, made all the more meaningful when the subject is our ancestral persons, history and homeland.

These and other songs can be enjoyed by purchasing a CD or download of Songs of Rob Roy and the MacGregors, by singer/songwriter Carl Peterson. I highly recommend this recording and believe you will not be disappointed. Himself a MacGregor, Carl has performed and produced 12 songs about our Clan that you can add to your collection by going to www.carl-peterson.com where you will find this and a number of other enjoyable collections of Scottish folk songs.

In parts two and three we will explore 6 more tunes about Clan Gregor. Enjoy!

Wayne MacGregor Parker



Gordon McGregor and the Ford Motor Company

Gordon McGregor and the Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd. (Ford du Canada Limitée) was founded in 1904, manufacturing and selling Ford automobiles in Canada and the British Empire. It was originally known as the Walkerville Wagon Works, and was located in Walkerville, Ontario (now part of Windsor, Ontario). The founder, Gordon McGregor (pictured to the right), convinced a group of investors to invest in Henry Ford's new automobile, which was being produced across the river in Detroit.

The Model C, the first car to be produced in Canada, rolled out of the factory in late September 1904. The Company could produce two cars at a time and in its first full year of production it was able to produce 117 automobiles. The Company's first export sales outside of Canada were to Calcutta, India in the British Commonwealth. In these efforts and future successes, Gordon McGregor was a true pioneer.



Reflections on the Gathering 2018

Here are some first-hand reflections from some of the Canadian Gregors who attended the Gathering in Scotland in July 2018.

When I first booked this trip, I intended for it to be a bonding experience with my father. But it ended up being so much more than that. I found a passion for my heritage, a deep sense of pride in our clan's courageousness, and a sense of belonging like none other. The breathtaking scenery, storytelling, and architecture added greatly to the sense of majesty. My most heartfelt thanks to all who helped make this event a reality. Here's to 2022!

Michelle MacAdam , Montreal, Quebec

Some thoughts on our recent Clan Gathering. Barb, Don and I were very pleased with our accommodations and with the hospitality shown by all at the Clan Gregor Gathering. I know that when I visit Scotland I feel like I have come home. The tours were well organized and I feel fortunate that Peter Lawrie was our tour guide. His incredible knowledge of MacGregor history, which he freely shared, has motivated me to research further into my family tree.

Barb, Dale and Don MacGregor, Kanata, Ontario

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I have been thinking about the MacGregors and the Scotland trip a lot. I just wish I could get that connection back to Scotland, and maybe someday I will. I am working on it.

For me (going to the Clan Gathering) was a trip of a lifetime. So many memories! What stands out the most is the trip to the 3 Isles and the beautiful scenery that the Highlands offer. If I were to live there, I would never be tired of looking at the highlands and the waterways. So much was packed into that week! The history and Keith and Peter's storytelling! The history is fascinating and whets the appetite for more.

Francis Ferguson, Bobcaygeon, Ontario

This was a fantastic Gathering as usual. There are a million new memories. The most sentimental memory is the intense emotion I had when walking with the other Clan members in the parade of the clans at the Lachearnhead Highland Games on Saturday July 21st. I was kitted in walking kilt and sash but also socks of the Rob Roy tartan with red maple leaf on them - odd, but 'game' for the occasion. For me, the emotion always generates when with other clans because of the history of our clan's proscription – I guess that emotion is part of the outrage and frustration experienced by anyone who is in a minority and being victimized.

The most delightful memory was the shopping spree indulged in at the Clan Gregor tent. Used items from other members led to impulse purchases at lost-leader prices.

The warmest memories are the chats with table mates at Loch Awe Hotel each breakfast and dinner. Mates were Tom Kerr and wife from Mississauga and Guy McGregor, Clan treasurer, and wife from East Anglia.

The most grateful memory is touring and reading the exhibits in the new Clan History Room in the Clan Menzies Castle. A huge undertaking and a job well done thanks to Peter Lawrie and Richard McGregor.

The most lasting memory has been the time spent since, reading the delightful book by Elizabeth Beauchamp, *The Braes of Balquidder*, purchased at the tent during the games on the suggestion of Council member Ross McGregor. It is easy reading of some 25 chapters, 4-5 pages each, which outline the history of the area and of the clan. Can't wait for the next gathering...

Elizabeth MacDonald, Sarnia, Ontario

Sharon and I had a wonderful time and there are too many highlights to name them all. Here in

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Reflections on the Gathering 2018

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order are the best of the best.

1. Getting to the Menzies Castle and seeing everyone dressed up was the top.
2. Although it was a long day, our trip to Mull, Iona and Staffa Island was fabulous. I have done a lot of research on the McDougall Clan. They came from Mull to the Wallaceburg area in 1804. Staffa was just like The Giant Causeway in Ireland and stunning.
3. The march-in at the highland games was my third special moment. The McGregor clan made a great splash at this event.

We loved the accommodation at the Loch Awe Hotel, also Kilchurn Castle and the crannogs tour. There were no poor tours and we got a great pint after getting back each day and so we have only good memories! Sorry Dr. Richard McGregor wasn't on the agenda to give us a DNA update. Thanks for getting us together as a Canadian group.

Tom and Sharon Kerr, Thornhill, Ontario

Scotland 2018 was an amazing trip. It was wonderful to be part of such a large group of kin! The palpable connection to the past that I felt, especially in the yard at Dalmally Kirk, is not something I will ever forget. Looking forward to 2022!

Dan Greer, Creemore, Ontario

My highland journey. Visiting the highlands was on my bucket list but now having learned a bit about my Gregor heritage I am excited to try to fill the bucket. The entire clan meeting was well planned and went smoothly. We were well treated and kept busy with interesting daily tours and activities. A real joy to share this with my daughter.

Sandy MacAdam, Truro Nova Scotia

In 2018 I went to my first Gregor International Clan gathering. I had volunteered at our local Highland Games, and after looking for a clan tent representing MacGregors without any success, I started searching online. Within minutes I came across the International Gathering, and decided it sounded like a great way to meet possible relatives and see some of Scotland at the same time.

What I was very surprised at, was how everyone knew the history of the Gregor clan and of Scotland. Yes, history was my least favorite subject in school, however, many of the attendee's

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Reflections on the Gathering 2018

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knowledge of history was way beyond what might have been taught in Canada. Seeing the countryside, castles and churches in Scotland, and hearing of the battles our ancestors went through defending their land, piqued my interest. Will I ever be interested in such in-depth knowledge as some of the history buffs? No that will never be me, but understanding what happened and why, is something I would like to learn more about.

Having the opportunity to see the gorgeous countryside with rolling hills, endless lochs and sheep, was wonderful. I fell in love with the Highland Coos! To pass through villages that were so quaint and unlike Canadian towns was lovely, though I really wish we had been able to stop in more of them, and wander/ shop/ have a drink or bite to eat and talk to the locals.

I enjoyed having the hotel to ourselves, knowing that whomever I passed by would be a fellow member of the gathering, making it much easier to randomly speak to others. Meeting others from around the world was great, seeing two sets of twins in a relatively small group of people surprised me! There are good and bad sides to Facebook, and the good being it allows an easy way to keep in touch with those we met and help keep those memories alive. Impatiently waiting for the next Gathering in 2022.....

Joanne Howlett, Victoria, British Columbia



2023 GAMES REPORT

2023 GAMES REPORT

This year was our best ever for expanding our presence in the Scottish community in Canada. As a Chapter we were able to significantly increase our exposure by raising the Clan Gregor Society banner at XX Highland Games in XX Provinces in Canada. These Gatherings are the lifeblood of the Scottish diaspora as they bring together all the key elements of Clan, music, dancing, athletics, food, drink, vendors and celebrities, all focused on sharing the culture of the Scots. They are unquestionably our most productive outreach effort and provide many opportunities to be together with old friends and meet new seekers.

Our booth or tent is staffed with volunteers. Special thanks to Bill Petrie, Sylvie Thériault, Stacey Crawford, Frances Ferguson, Mike Petrie, and Alex Petrie for your many hours helping out with set up, meeting the public and recording new members and sales this summer. There are many jobs and many hands make light work. These jobs are meaningful and meeting members of clan can be both fun and rewarding. Who knows, you might even discover distant family connections! I encourage all who are remotely interested to contact me to talk about helping next summer. It's not scary and no experience is required, just a willingness to interact with interesting people. We'll provide the training and work closely with you to make certain you succeed and enjoy the experience.

Here's images and notes for all the venues we attended in 2023.

Victoria

Victoria games always take place on Victoria Day weekend. The 106th Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival kicked off on the Friday night with a meet and greet, followed an evening of Celtic music at the beautiful Craigflower Community Centre.

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Many MacGregors dropped by and expressed their pleasure at seeing our tent for the first time at Victoria.

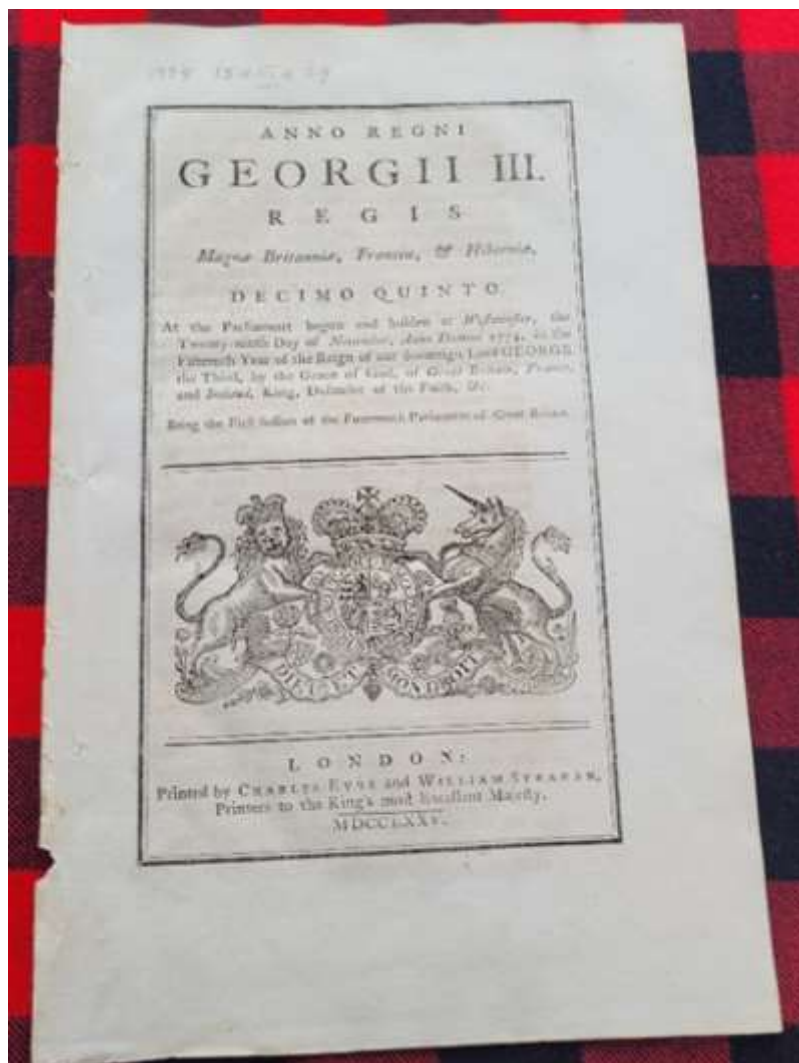


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We even managed to capture some of the dancing, piping competition, and whiskey tasting.



We find at the games, there is always someone interesting to meet. For the Victoria games, it was Randy Stewart who had a display of several antique documents, jewelry, and other artifacts from Scotland. He later dropped by our tent to show us a copy of the act from 1774 that repealed the ban on the MacGregor name.

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Georgetown

On June 10, CASSOC attended the Georgetown Highland Games. Alex Petrie was one of the convenors for the tent.



Always nice to meet friends at the games. Jane Pekar was assisting the team in judging the piping competition.



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Moncton

On June 17 we arrived for the Greater Moncton Highland Games & Scottish Festival. Temperatures were a bit frisky, reaching only a high of 12 degrees.



(Above) William waiting for the parade, Mel Fitton of New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association leading the parade with the Haggis and Sylvie Thériault with the Master of Ceremonies.

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Kingsville

June 24 brings us to Kingsville, Ontario. Clan Gregor tent is between the CASSOC and Clan MacDonald tents.



It's not a surprise to see the MacGregor Modern Tartan being worn by a Pipe Band and others!

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Kincardine

July 8-9 brings us to the shores of Lake Huron to the Kincardine Scottish Festival and Highland Games where we got to enjoy watching many of the festival activities near the Clan Village.



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Cambridge

On July 15, we travelled to Cambridge, Ontario to attend the Cambridge Scottish Festival. All the clans lined up in the Gregor/CASSOC area away from the rain to prepare for the parade.



Uxbridge

July is proving to be a busy month for Highland games. July 22 finds us in Uxbridge, Ontario at the Uxbridge Scottish Festival. Whenever possible, we make the rounds and meet with friends from other clans. (Below) William Petrie and Doug Doughty from Clan McAulay.



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(Above) William Petrie and Ian Irwin from Clan Irwin Association. (Below) Alex was always ready for a photo opportunity.



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Having Clan Gregor friends and family dropping by was a real treat.



Glengarry

Glengarry, Maxville Ontario August 4th and 5th. Home to the North American Pipe Band Championships, Glengarry never disappoints. We enjoyed beautiful weather and attendance at the Games was once again brisk. There's something so catching about the enthusiasm of the crowds, the efforts of the Bands, dancers and athletes that simply can't be replicated indoors. The mood always feels like one giant party, and this is especially true as the entire town of Maxville and surrounding area is clearly oriented around celebrating their Scottish ancestry. A highlight was putting our largest delegation of Gregors, 24 in all, marching in the opening ceremony. The Friday night Ceilidh was superb and the massed bands at the closing ceremony included over 1000 pipers and drummers taking to the field. Simply awesome!

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(Below) Sylvie Thériault and Wayne MacGregor Parker greeting new and old members at Glengarry.



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Always fun to participate in the Clan Parade. Michael Petrie leads the way with the Clan Gregor banner.



Montreal

We left Glengarry on Saturday evening to setup for the Sunday Montreal Highland Games, August 6th. The tent we had brought to Montreal was the one used in Moncton, which having been lifted by strong winds, was damaged and unusable. Rescue came from our friends, the MacFarlanes, who graciously included us in their tent. Shown below is Sylvie in front of the shared tent with our new member Joseph MacGregor who is accompanied by his daughter and grand-daughter.



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(Below) Clan Alley before the crowds arrived and a group photo of all the clans.



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Fergus

Fergus, August 11, 12 and 13, can rightfully boast the largest gathering of the Clans. This year there were close to 100 Clans represented in the crowded Avenue of the Clans. As a result, activity at our tent was quite brisk. Similar to Glengarry, we fielded our largest ever number of members in the Clan march at the opening ceremony with 26 Gregors falling in behind our banner. It's so encouraging to have such robust participation including a number of children and young people! The weather was ideal and the days full of activity. If you want to experience a large, well run and polished gathering be sure to take in Fergus as it is one of the best.



Wayne MacGregor Parker, Stacey Crawford, and Sylvie Thériault.

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(Below) Images from the Clan Parade at Fergus



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We had the pleasure of meeting Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran, 10th Bt., Chief of the Name and Arms of Fergusson and his lovely wife Jenny.



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North Lanark (Almonte) Highland Games on Saturday, August 26



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(Above) Wee MacGregors visiting the booth, (Below) Michael and William visiting Clan Strachan



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Quebec

The Québec Festival is a two-day event for clans, held September 9-10.



Alex was on double duty that weekend, helping both at the Clan Gregor and CASSOC tents.

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Niagara

The Niagara Celtic Heritage Festival took place September 16-17 in Lockport, New York. We were blessed with beautiful weather the entire weekend.



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The opening ceremonies at Niagara Celtic with Erica Petrie representing Clan Gregor at the Sword Ceremony.

This is a ceremony honoring volunteers and armed force personnel from the area that have passed away during the year.

History and Heritage

History and Heritage

History and heritage are two words that come up often in inquiries and conversations about Clan stories. For some of our members these are mainstays of why they belong the Clan Gregor Society and are important cornerstones of understanding their family's past. For others they represent amusing back drop information at best. Some want to know only the big picture, just enough to get an approximate sense of main events. Others eagerly seek to understand what took place, when it happened, and its importance in both context and outcome. Depending on who you are and your personal reasons for wanting to identify with your connections to Gregor, these can lead to responses that are either hmmm that's interesting or please tell me more. I'm not suggesting that you have to self-identify with either but I think it's worth reflecting on this and asking yourself if you're satisfied with the answer.

Some will join simply to wear our tartan and be part of the social aspects of both Clan and Society. For many, this is often an important first and only step into the world of MacGregor. But there is more, much more for the curious. How? Why, what did it mean? A basic knowledge of our unique history and heritage is an important part of understanding who we are. A deepening awareness can significantly enrich this sense of belonging. One of the founding purposes of our Society was to teach the Clan's history and heritage back to the children and families that were so widely dispersed during proscription. We exist today to continue to do that for those who believe they descend through Gregor. So, let's look at history and heritage and see how they can lead to an increasing celebration of your roots and enjoyment of your place as a Gregor in the world.

History is defined as a discipline that studies the chronological record of events, usually attempting, on the basis of a critical examination of source materials, to explain events. (Cambridge Dictionary) Here we draw on key events that shaped our future. An example would be the fact that we (Gregors) supported John Balliol and not Robert the Bruce as successor to King Alexander III in 1291. The Campbells did and this led to a string of events that ended with Bruce awarding all our lands to Neil Campbell in 1308. This single event forever shaped the fortunes of our Clan and is a key turning point. There are many other examples such as Grey Colin obtaining a charter to Gregor lands in 1563, or the battle of Glen Fruin in 1602. In addition, today we can examine historical references such as the Dean of Lismore's Black Book of Taymouth, as well as the works of others such as Amelia Murray MacGregor, Ronald Williams and WH Murray telling the stories and oral traditions behind these events. We examine them from a 360 perspective to get a balanced understanding. We cobble these together to provide our

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members with factually based information and to help dispel inaccuracies. The Society publishes a number of Occasional Papers on our website as well as articles in our Newsletters, all aimed at increasing the informed member's knowledge of our history.

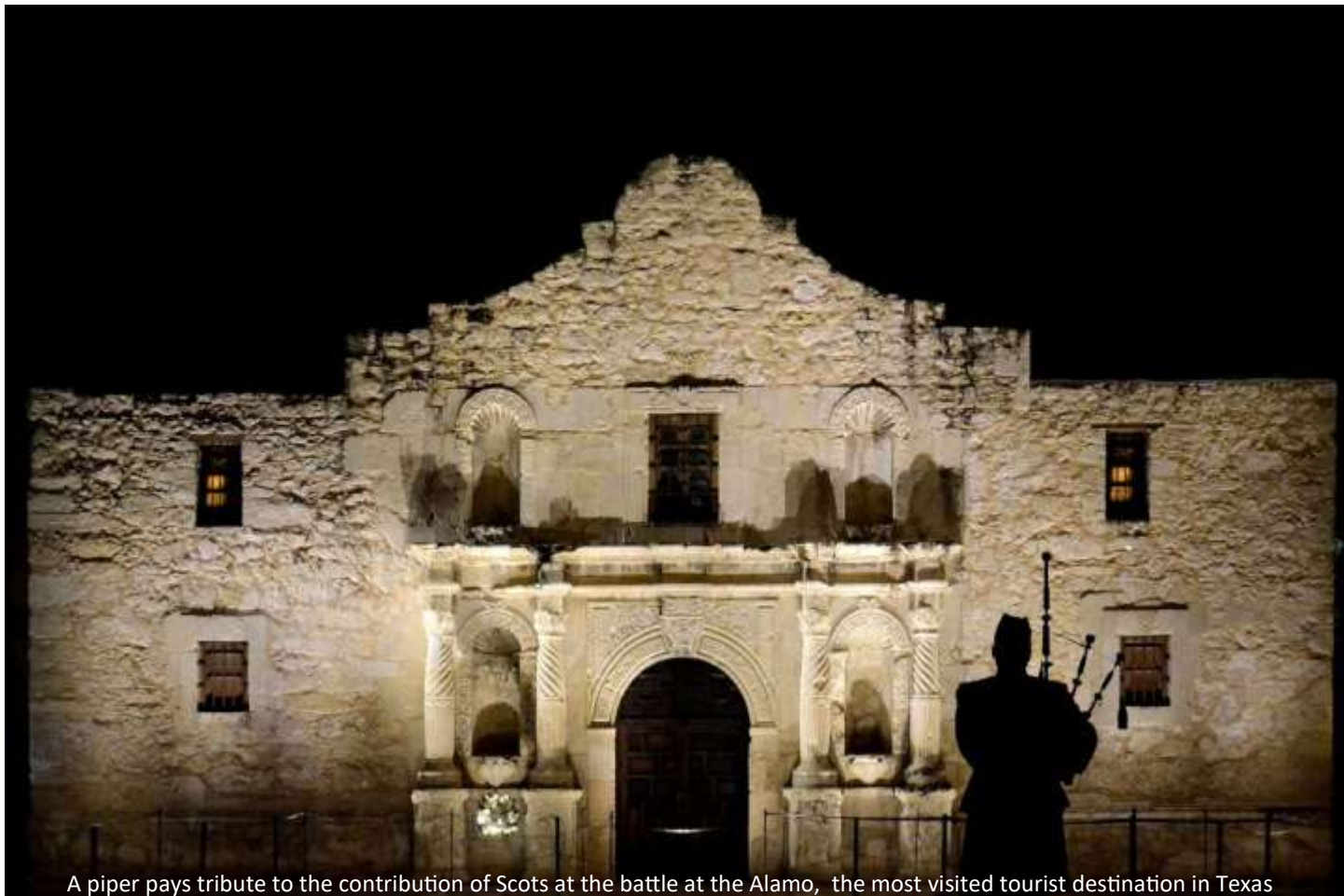
Heritage is defined as unique features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or dress. (Cambridge Dictionary) In this regard, we explore the evolution of things that immediately call to mind Clan Gregor. An example of both tradition and language would be the origin and symbolism of the Chief's banner showing an uprooted oak tree, crown and sword. Tradition has it that the King, (either Alexander I., or David I. or Malcolm IV), was out hunting with Malcolm, Chief of Clan Gregor when the King was rushed by an angry wild boar. The young Chief, known to be a very strong man, asked the King if he wanted him to intercede with the charging beast. The king responded, 'E'en do, bait spair nocht.', whereupon Malcolm supposedly uprooted an oak sapling and successfully beat off the attacker with one hand while running it through with a sword in the other. In gratitude, the King granted the Chief peerage, and the oak, sword and crown for use on his personal armorial banner. Today it remains on Sir Malcolm's arms. Another example of language would be use of the phrase, "Ard Choille", Gaelic for "the high woods" associated with the Gregor's many raids on the Campbells led by Duncan Ladasach in the mid 1500's. And lastly, an example of dress would be our own unique tartans. Although much fancied and promoted during the Victorian era, these basic patterns have traditional origins associated with Clan Gregor. The Rob Roy tartan was first recorded by the Highland Society in 1815 and associated with him as a simple sett worn by himself and woven by the poor folks he championed.

These are but a few examples of the myriads of events, dates, cultural traditions and Gaelic phrases most associated with Clan Gregor. They are drawn to your attention to shine a light on the wealth of interesting information that makes up the body of our fascinating history and heritage. It is an amazing journey of exploration. The challenge then is to decide for yourself; are you satisfied with the simple 10,000-foot view or are you drawn to an increasingly deep understanding of events and their outcomes? This is a challenge to all who call themselves a part of Clan Gregor.

There are no wrong answers.

Wayne MacGregor Parker

The Piper of the Alamo



A piper pays tribute to the contribution of Scots at the battle at the Alamo, the most visited tourist destination in Texas

Over half of the men who fought and died at the Alamo on March 6, 1836 during the Texas War of Independence are believed to have Scot heritage. The best remembered of the four known to have been born in Scotland was John McGregor.

McGregor was somewhere between 33 to 38 years old when he took part in the siege of Bexar and later served in the Alamo garrison as a second sergeant of Capt. William R. Carey's artillery company. Various lines of research have been done to properly identify McGregor birth in Scotland with the most likely being that he is Dull near Drumcharry, Perthshire who emigrated with his father from Oban through to Charlottetown, PEI in August of 1808. But we all know how records blur our hindsight!

McGregor is becoming the best known of the Scots, as he was the "piper at the Alamo." He is said to have entertained the troops by engaging in musical duets/duels with Davy Crockett – he on the pipes and Crockett on the fiddle. A Mrs. Dickerson, sole Texan survivor, remembered in later years that McGregor always won as far as she was concerned, for he made a "strange, dreadful sound" with his pipes.

While there is no formal record of the Mexicans reaction to MacGregor's pipes, there is, however, an interesting tradition which does tell what the Mexicans thought. It goes that Santa Anna, the opposing general, sent under flag of truce a request for McGregor to stop playing. It was only

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The Piper of the Alamo

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when this request was refused that he ordered the red flag to be run up, signifying that no prisoners would be taken.

It's easy and fanciful to believe that the duel interludes between McGregor and Crocket were primarily for morale, to lift the spirits of the defenders. This is contrary to what we know as the traditional role of the piper in battle and the full meaning of bagpipes as both an instrument and a weapon of war.

Genealogy researcher Barbara Zoe Alexander best explains this in a 1992 paper she authored at the behest of the Clan Gregor Society in Scotland, wherein she writes:

“A pity Texas’ historians have never recognized the significance of McGregor’s role on that day; that what appears to them as a quaint whimsy on his part, was really dead serious duty, and he saw that duty through – “to the deid.” What a different story it would have made, if they had realized that the custom of playing the pipes in battle is forever meshed with Scottish tradition, for the piper was to Celtic warfare what the drummer and bugler were in later wars – and more. He was the heartbeat of the Clan, the keeper of their collective spirit, the recorder of their deeds, victories and tragedies. The tunes he played had special meaning to his people, and could rally men and stir their emotions like nothing else. Further, he went into battle expecting to die – and knowing his value to the battle tactics and spirits of his Clansmen, the enemy were generally eager to oblige. Even the soldiers of Mexico, who’d never heard the squall of the bagpipe, instinctively knew this man, McGregor, could not be allowed to live.

In that proud tradition of the Scottish pipers, John McGregor upheld the honor of his ancestors and on March 6, 1836, passed into the ranks of legend.”

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John MacGregor playing at the raising of the standard at Glenfinnan?

The Piper of the Alamo

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We may not know who exactly John MacGregor was. Born in Scotland with that name he was almost certainly of the MacGregor pipers of the Clann an Sgeulaiche [of Drumcharry, 10 miles from Aberfeldy in Perthshire] and may well have been a grandson of the John I who was piper to Prince Charles Edward. John I had four sons (two of them called John) and eight grandsons, at least two of whom were called John.

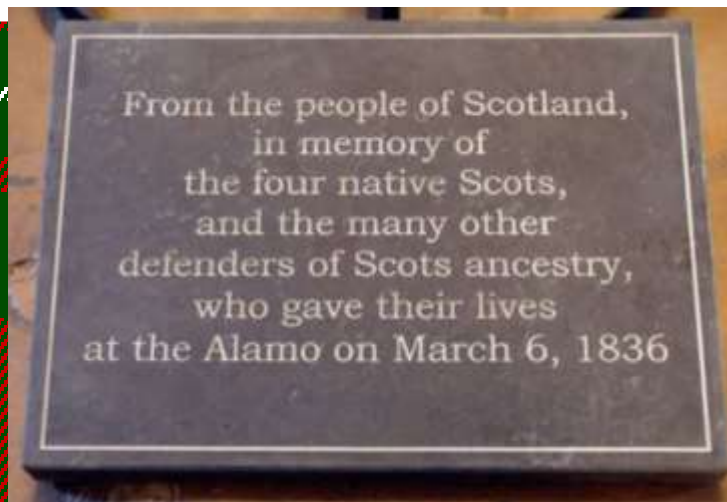
John I took third prize at the first piping competition, at Falkirk in 1781. His son, Patrick na Coraig was placed first. The family dominated the Highland Society of London competitions for the first 30 years. A full account is given by Archibald Campbell of Kilberry in Piping Times Vol. 2 Nos. 10, 11 and 12 (1950). John of the Alamo may well have competed at these competitions before deciding to emigrate.

While visiting Texas in 2009, Scot journalist Kevin McKenna learned the story of McGregor and his fellow Scots. Questioning why the Scots' contribution was ignored in a short film shown at the Texas shrine, he then wrote an article about their role in the historic battle for "The Observer." This renewed public attention such that a process began which culminated a year later in a ceremony at the Alamo on April 8, 2010, to honor the memory and the contribution of McGregor and his fellow Scotsmen. While the Saltire had long been displayed at the Alamo, as had the flags of all the nations represented by its defenders, never before had there been a memorial to the dead of a single nation. Scotland would be the first to be so honored.

Placed at the Alamo on that day was a plaque hewn out of Caithness stone. It reads, "From the people of Scotland in memory of the four native Scots and the many other defenders of Scots ancestry, who gave their lives at the Alamo on March 6, 1836."

Texas and Scotland share a history of birth on the battlefield and from those battles emerged heroic characters whose names remain larger than life. Though John MacGregor's name has not yet reached such lofty heights, he is ascending still. This March 6th, let's raise a toast to John MacGregor, the piper of the Alamo!

By William Petrie based upon various sources



McGregor Kilts



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